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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to define the essential characteristics of Rastafarian art and to explore it as a part of the Rastafarian social identity. To do this, the paper: (1) examines the Rastafarian movement and its development; (2) discusses the techniques, images, and symbolism used; (3) reviews Rastafarian artists to gain an insight into their expression; and (4) theorizes about Rastafarian art and how it has aided Rastafarians and others outside the movement to understand Rastafarians better. Much of what is known about Rastafarian identity and liberation can be found in the movement art forms. Rastafarian art is the imaginative visualization of the community of Rastafarians, expressed by means of drawing, painting, carving, and sculpting. Some characteristics of this art are symbolic imagery, color, and placements. The work often articulates the struggle of the oppressed person of African descent and can be seen not only on buildings, churches, and homes, but also on kiosks and local sheds that market items related to Rastafarian identity. The beginnings of Rastafarianism can be found in Ethiopia. The characteristics of Rastafarian art forms are often associated with African culture. A true understanding of Rastafarian art cannot be fully gained without a knowledge of Rastafarian history and culture. (Contains 17 references.) (BT)

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The use of symbolism in the struggle for liberation: The historical and global exploration of Rastafarian art

A paper by
Ronald M. Kohn

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"Society puts its free sprits in prison, when instead it should cherish its wise minority"
(Henry David Thoreau)

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Introduction

The purpose of this study is to define the essential characteristics of Rastafarian art and to explore it as a part of the Rastafarian social identity. In order to do this I will, (1) examine the Rastafarian movement itself and its development, (2) discuss the techniques, images, and symbolism used, (3) review Rastafarian artists so as to get an insight into their own expression; and (4) theorize about Rastafarian art and how it has aided both Rastafarians and others outside of the movement in a better understanding of Rastafarians. Much of what is known about Rastafarian identity and liberation can be found in the movement art forms.

Rastafarian art is the imaginative visualization of the community of Rastafarians. It is expressed by means of drawing, painting, carving and sculptures. Some of the characteristics of this art are 1) symbolic imagery, 2) color, and (3) placements. This work often articulated the struggle of the oppressed person of African decent and can be seen not only on buildings, churches and homes, but also on kiosks and shed that retail items related to Rastafarian identity. The characteristics found in Rastafarian art forms are often associated with African culture and such association makes this type of art form aesthetically curious. The dominant characteristics impel the onlooker to stare and strive for a complete understanding. However, a true understanding cannot be fully gained without an understanding of Rastafarian history and culture.

The Movement

In a number of countries, outside of the West Indies and South America, many diverse people and cultures are aware of and identify with Rastafarian and other types of cultural art forms that depict images by African/Blacks. However, there is a tendency to disassociate from Rastafarians because of the negative stigma often connected with the culture. This rejection is an outcome of the negative perception brought on by so-called "Rasta's" or those who only externally resemble Rastafarians who were engaged in illicit drugs, theft and other illegal activities. This stigma may also be rooted in the fact that there is a certain mysticism surrounding the movement.

At the onset of the movement, many thought that the Rasta's were mad and dangerous. Others hoped that it was a passing fad that would disappear in a few years. On the contrary, Rastafarianism in the West Indies and South America starting from the mid 1970s had found a home. Coupled with the "Black Power Movement" of the 1970s, Rastafarianism ignited a Black awareness that cannot be denied. It is said that a civilization is at its height when its art is at its best. And it was during the Rastafarian era that painted booths were found at every turn, and there was a flourishing of Rastafarian artistry everywhere including Europe. This artistry displayed a desire for true liberation and social justice. But by the dawn of the 1990s, much of the artwork had disappeared. What has remained, though, is still a force to be reckoned with, and respected. It is a reminder not only of the presence and the history of Rastafarians but also of the beliefs shared by Rastafarians globally. Rastafarian artists have, through their work, shown the

world that they are as a people with deep beliefs. They have built a relationship between themselves and society through the iconography of their art.

To examine Rastafarian art as symbolic in the liberation struggle is to delve into the ideology of the people and the reasoning behind their ideology. Rastafarianism traces its origins to biblical times. This is important to understand as the lineage of Rastafarian leaders is traced to the Bible and more specifically to Solomon the Wise. Rasta's believe, as do Jews and Christians, that Jacob had twelve sons, one of who was Judah. Judah is the father of David, who is the father of Solomon the Wise. Solomon consort's with the Queen of Sheba of Ethiopia and from that union a son, Menilik I was born. It is through Menilik I that Rastafarians make their connection to Solomon the Wise. This follows through to modern times, as Emperor Haile Salassie, through Menilik I, was the 225th descendent of Solomon and therefore King of that dynasty. The issue of Ethiopia was taken from the "Kabra Negast" which was compiled by six Tignean scribes in the 14th century and leads Blacks to believe in themselves as a "chosen people". These Blacks were not only ruled by direct descendents of Solomon but also held, as their possession, the country of origin the Tabernacle of Zion, the Ark of the Covenant which includes 1) the two tablets in which the ten commandments were written, 2) the pot containing the manna from heaven, and 3) the rod of Aaron that budded without being planted. Rastafarians see this as proof that G-d was with them and validation of their movement and their struggle for liberation.

It was in 1892 that Haile Salassie I, was born "Ras Tafari", as he was called. He was crowned emperor in 1930 and ruled Ethiopia until the 12th of September 1974, when

he was dethroned. The deposition of Emperor Salassie was seen by his followers as akin to Christ's crucifixion. This is because Rastafarians' believe Salassie to be the true G-d. Salassie is believed to be the only Black Messiah who became flesh for their redemption and liberation. Rastafarians also see Ethiopia as the Promised Land. Marcus Mosiah Garvey, a famous Jamaican liberation leader, predicted the coming of the Black Messiah. He said, "Look to the east for the crowning of the Black King in him shall be your redemption." This is said to be a direct tie to the "Book of Revelations", " Weep not, behold the lion of the Tribe of Judah, the root of David has prevailed to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof" (The Greek New Testament, 1975, p. 847-849). Garvey felt that this lion was Salassie, the true G-d, returned to save Blacks and redeem or liberate them from oppression. Garvey was also responsible for the repatriation drive when he established "the Black Star Shipping Line". With this company, Africans/Blacks were to return to Africa, the Promised Land, by ship. This however, did not occur on the stipulated day of October 5, 1959. This did not happen and it caused much grief among Rastafarians. However, their spirits did not fall.

Structure and Philosophy

The definitive Rastafarian philosophy began to develop and creep slowly into West Indian and Latin American Society following a speech made by Marcus Mosiah Garvey in which he said, "Look to the East, for the crowing of a black King shall be your redemption". (Rasta: Emperor Haile Selassie and the Rastafarians, 1977) This statement, led the movement to believe that Selassie was the Messiah that would lead Africa and Africa's children on a path to true liberation. The followers began to distinguished

themselves by growing their hair and coiling it into matted locks in accordance with Biblical instruction, 1) "There shall not be made baldness upon their heads, neither shall they shave off the corner of their beards or make any cuttings of their flesh." (The Greek Septuagint, 1851, p. 157) This text, however, also relates to cutting or shaving of hair in Jewish Identity "; 2) "All the days of the vows of his separation there shall be no razor upon his head and he shall allow his hair to grow until the vow of the separation be fulfilled." Rastafarian's also adhere to a strict vegetarian diet, as it is called, Ital, referring to clean and natural foods. The Rastafarian movement also looked at Marijuana or Ganja as it is sometimes called, in the same manner as peyote is used by various native cultures. It is smoked and has religious significance. Similarly the blood of chickens is used in the Santeria movement and the blood of a young ram is used in the Voodoo movement in Cuba, Santo Domingo, Puerto Rico, Haiti, and other Latin American and West Indian countries. Ganja was a term that Rastafarians used to identify a holy herb and they found it in biblical text, "He caused the grass to grow for the cattle and the herb for the service of man", which is found in Genesis.

Apart from the laws governing their hair, food and their herbs, Rastafarians are also governed by other basic laws some of which included, 1) to worship and serve no other G-d than Ras Tafari, outlawing all other forms of pagan worship yet respecting all believers; 2) to disapprove and abhor hate, jealousy, envy, deceit, and guile; 3) they do not agree with the pleasures of the present day society and its modern evils; and 4) they adhere to the ancient laws of Ethiopia and there are also unwritten laws that govern their liberation struggle. It is through these laws, and with the aid of reggae music, that Rastafarianism in the Americas flourished. It should be noted that while there are many

of those who believe in Rastafarianism there are also many, especially in the United States of America, that have merely taken on the physical vestiges of the culture. These are often males of European descent who will grow their hair and have it matted for dreadlocks, wear the colors of the movement and may have co-opted Rastafarianism as validation for their use of marijuana. This may have resulted in diminishing the credibility of the movement in the eyes of the larger society, most specifically the dominant culture. These males may have taken on some of the attributes of the culture but they have neglected to fully invest and commit themselves to the substance of the movement and belief system.

Many Africans/Blacks around the world identified with Rastafarianism. As a movement it has presented them with an opportunity to search into their own Black history, the Bible and indeed in to their own identity. They were trying, subconsciously, to establish for themselves a defined personality that would be accepted positively by others in the community. They attempted to exemplify this identity not only physically through their appearance but also in their music, worship, language and art. Another means was through the development of businesses.

Rastafarians developed an ideal for entrepreneurship, and this entrepreneurial zeal appeared in every city where there was a proliferation of Rastafarian art. These newfound entrepreneurs retailed many different types of merchandise. They were thus able to employ many other Rastafarians, thereby liberating them from a master - slave relationship in the work place. Rastafarians had greater control over their own destiny and no longer needed to depend on the dominant culture for their economic survival. This

was also a means to familiarize and educate others around the world as to their beliefs and their struggles.

As the number of these young entrepreneurs increased, so did the quality and quantity of their artistic expression. The variety of symbols, scenes and statements surrounding Black oppression, Haile Salassie and Africa emerged. The brilliant red, green and yellow/gold colors of the movement could be seen everywhere woven into the pictures of flags and lions and bars and chains. It was the age of the Rasta, the Rastafarian era. And never before or since was there such an outpouring of enthusiasm expressed through art as to what Rastafarianism was all about.

The art expressed a biblical religion as its roots showing what the Rasta's held as significant and sacred coupled with historical and cultural ideas. It brought an awakening to Blacks, those who identified as Rasta's, as well as, others. This was a movement that sought social, political, economical, and physical liberation for all. This awakening was sorely needed at a time when colonies were achieving their independence from their colonizers throughout the Americas, Africa and Asia. With a mixture of people all searching for their identity and having nothing solid to hold on to this awakening resulted in self–exploration and expression. The various forms of Rastafarian art hold not only a great degree of depth, but rank high in aesthetic sensibilities as well. While there are common symbols throughout the art, individual artists had the freedom to develop their own mode of expression. This provided an opportunity for a variety of interpretations that could connect with an increasingly larger audience.

Imagery and Symbolism in Rastafarian Liberation

As Ben Johnson reasoned in 1968, "Is not all the knowledge of the Egyptian unit mystic symbols? Speak not the scriptures oft in parables? Are not the choicest fables of the poets that were the fountains and first springs of wisdom wrapped in perplex allegories? (p. 127)." The practitioners of Rastafarian art show an inward sensibility to art on the whole. The visual image is not sacrificed, but rather at the core of the call for liberation. And it is the blending of this sensibility together with their own personal expressive needs that results in the development of their own individualistic style.

It is the freedom to create a mix and yet not follow another's type of work that made a Rastafarian artist unique. These artists sought no fame or recognition, but rather to express their ideology and liberation ideals as best as they could through their artistic expression. The work that they created was not just a means of self-expression, but a venue to relay their message to others. This was a message that sought to instill in others a sense of pride and support for their own struggle for liberation, as well as, an invitation to join with the Rastafarian movement, an invitation that implied agreement with the tenets of Rastafarianism. Their work is realistic and impressive, and it may be only a viewer's misconception of the movement and its ideology that detracts from a full appreciation of its goals.

In order to fully appreciate the liberation motif in Rastafarian artistic typology, it is important to discuss the symbols and colors used, and what they mean in their liberation struggle. It is also necessary know what the movement set forth to convey to

the viewer. Therefore, in order to understand each symbol, we must examine them separately.

The Lion

One of the most predominant symbols in Rastafarian liberation imagery is the Lion. The Lion, according to James Hall, is described as: "a common symbolic beast in religious and secular art with many attributes. A symbol of resurrection because, according to the bestiaries, the cubs, when born, lay dead for three days until their father brought them to life by breathing in their faces. The winged lion, an apocalyptic beast, stands for St. Mark. The strong hero wresting with a lion, is Sampson, or the personification of fortitude. ...Daniel sits unharmed in the lion's den, symbolic of the power of G-d to calm beasts. The lion is also the personification of Africa.... (Hall, p. 193) ".

The lion symbol reflects the dominant maleness of the Rastafarian movement, and the pride and the Rastafarian in their hair, stance and walk emulates dignity of the lion; suggesting an image of aggressiveness, strength and determination in their liberation struggle. This symbol is also of a major significance for the movement because of its biblical liberation theme, and its connection between the biblical reference to G-d as being a Lion and the aspirations of the Rastafarian movement to attain true liberation and acceptance as an equal partner in social justice.

Color

The colors of Red, Black, Green and Yellow (Gold) are of major importance as they have particular meaning to the movement. The Red signifies the blood of the black masses throughout history that gave their lives in the struggle to be free from oppression. Red also represents of the blood of African children, men and women that will continue to be spilled for Africa's liberation and its masses. This is important, as the movement not only speaks of the past but looks to he future.

The Black is akin to the skin of the African masses, and is symbolic of a noble and ancient people, a people who in earlier times were masters of their own fate. The underlying goal of Rastafarianism is rooted to encourage and support African/Blacks and other oppressed peoples, to feel pride in and, understand their history, as well as, acknowledge and fight for their destiny.

The Green is for the luxuriance, fertility and greenness of the land. As with many other cultures, Rastafarians understand their connection to the land and rather than being owners they are stewards of the land. They respect the earth and feel an obligation to maintain its ecosystem for themselves and for future generations.

The Yellow or Gold is symbolic of the richness of Africa, her people, and their faith. This once again harkens people to understand their past, connect it tot their faith and fight for their future. These colors were adopted to emphasize the determined effort of Rastafarian unity, liberation from oppression, community, and identity. In some countries and among some groups outside the movement, these colors are being used to show their solidarity with the movement and their liberation struggle.

Bars and Chains

The Bars and Chains are another frequently used symbolism in the Rastafarian liberation movement. These symbols are generally associated with oppression and exile and together they form the most negative images used by the movement. The image is also associated with slavery, and is usually presented with imagery that portrays liberation from oppression and from darker times. While the bars and chains confine a person or people, it is through the struggle for liberation that the chains and bars can be broken.

Ernest Cashmore reasoned, " External symbols are of particular importance in establishing distinctions, and solidifying exclusivity, also for providing a base, from which to articulate a critique and exercise power" (Rastaman-The Rastafarian Movement in England, p. 164). Symbols, therefore, are important as they express meaning and give form. By using symbols, the Rastafarians have become symbolist, and it is only through an understanding these symbols, the oppressors can comprehend and appreciate the ideology associated with the liberation struggle the Rastafarian movement is engaged in.

Globalization of Rastafarian Expression

In the Dialectic of Freedom, Maxine Greene (1988) asks, "What does it mean to be a citizen of the free world?" It means, she concludes, having the capacity to choose, the power to act to attain one's purposes, and the ability to help transform a world lived

in common with others. The Rastafarian movement as a community utilizes education structures through their symbols within a pluralistic society to affirm and help the larger community understand their home and community cultures. However, their aim is also to help free the community from their cultural boundaries. It is create and maintain a civic community that works for the common good to liberate, educate, and promote liberation for all oppressed peoples within the global society. And to help the uninformed acquire knowledge, attitudes, and skills they will need to participate in civic action that will make the larger society more equitable and just.

Another important aspect of the Rastafarian Symbols is associated with empowerment and respect; these are incorporated throughout their artistic expression. The artist and the community are empowered when the information is expressed in the manner that they can reflect and feel that they are an integral part of information embedded in their artistic expression. When it comes to facing the reality of social and cultural dislocation, the Rastafarian movement is on the front lines. They were among the first in society to see the devastation that has occurred to the African/Black child's spirit.

I contend that the movement through its artistic expressions saw Africans/Blacks from the continent of Africa as a massive dislocation. The African person was physically separated from place, from culture, and from traditions. In the Americas, the African person was punished for remembering Africa. Drums were outlawed, and since the drum was an instrument to the cultural transmission of values, freedom, and traditions, its disappearance was one of the great losses of the African-American psyche. The community of Rastafarians through its numerous educational, social, religious, and political structures, institutions and expressions, attempted to minimize the dislocation.

Re-examination

These Rastafarian revolutionaries were exploring every available means of communication. They linked their artistic networks by energetic expressions in music and in art. Although, it is rarely noted in histories of the Rastafarian liberation struggle many of the arch revolutionaries came from a tradition of mystical fraternity. That sense of fraternity and spiritual enfranchisement played an important role in the intensity of the early Rastafarians and their commitment to the realization of a true society with "government by the community for the community."

In the early and middle twentieth century the Rastafarian movement restated and reinvigorated that earlier dream found in the biblical narrative of liberation. They rejected traditional authority in favor of inner authority. Their term for autonomy was "self-reliance". Transcendentalism seemed to them a more logical extension of the Rastafarian Revolution – spiritual liberation as a counter point to the freedoms guaranteed in natural law. The freedoms of natural law are, liberty, choice, and determining one's own destiny because man is born a free agent. The autonomy of the individual was more important to them than allegiance to any government. In his essays on Civil Disobedience Henry David Thoreau (1849) stated," If conscience did not concur with the law, civil disobedience was called for."

The Rastafarians supposedly threatened the established power with their "new ideas" and artistic expressions; but the ideas were not new, only the prospect of applying them in a larger society was a new concept. This eclectic liberation movement drew not only from traditional African religious movements and modern critical thinkers, religious

and secular but also from Greek and Jewish philosophers and Eastern religions, political and social movements. Although the Rastafarian movement was charged by various segments of the global community with having contempt for history, they replied that human kind should be liberated from history. While a people should be informed they should not be confined by their history.

Rastafarians were continuously challenging the assumptions of many, in every realm: religion, philosophy, science, economics, the arts, education and politics. Among themselves they tolerated dissent and diversity for they were sure that unanimity was neither possible nor desirable. They knew that each person sees the world through their own eyes, their own perspective. Long before Einstein, they believed that all observations were relative. They sought companions, not disciples. They embraced Thoreau's charge: "Cast your whole vote, not a strip of paper merely, but your whole influence. A minority is powerless while it conforms to the majority.... but it is irresistible when it clogs by its whole weight...Let your life be a counter friction to stop the machine (1849)."

A tenet of the Rastafarian movement is that mind and matter are continuous. Rastafarians view the universe as organic, open and evolutionary. They do not reject intellectual knowledge; but rather believe that reason and intuition are complimentary and mutually enriching. Rastafarians reason that inner reform must precede social reform; yet they continue to campaign on behalf of suffrage and pacifism and stand in opposition to all forms of oppression. In addition, Rastafarians are social innovators, establishing cooperative entrepreneurial communities and artistic expressions to demonstrate their collective approach to liberation.

The Transformation

Think of the movement as an open system – a dissipative structure, interacting with the environment, taking in information, while integrating and using it. The movement is transforming the input, ordering and recording, thereby creating coherence. Through its networks, and publications the movement is gathering people around the world in a common cause, trafficking in transformative ideas and spreading messages of hope without the sanction of any government. Transformation has no country and knows no bounds.

The Rastafarian movement overlaps political structures by forming coalitions. These coalitions, through artistic expression, support one another without generating a conventional power structure. The movement is fueled by grass roots power. Small local groups determine their own course in furthering the goals of the collective.

Historically, movements for social change have all operated in a similar manner. A paternal leadership has convinced the populace of the need for change. They recruit them for specific tasks, telling them what to do and when to do it. The Rastafarian movement operates on a different assumption of human potential. There is the belief that all individuals, once they are deeply convinced of a need for change can generate solutions from their own commitment and creativity. Thus, it supports their efforts and gives them information, but its structure cannot direct or contain their efforts.

The power of individuals to generate broad social change is the basis for the Rastafarian movement. The movement assumes that solutions do not reside in new

programs or more programs. "The nations of the world', Tocqueville (1839) said, are like travelers in a forest. Although each is unaware of the destination of the other, their paths lead inevitably toward meeting in the center of the forest". In this century of wars and economic crisis we have been lost in the forest of our darkest alienation. The Rastafarian movement did not wait on leadership. It began to effect change at any point it found itself in a complex system: a human life, a family, and a nation. Rastafarians believe that one person can create a transformative environment for others through trust and friendship and encourage growth and renewal in its members.

Perhaps that is why the transformed society exists already as a premonition in the minds of Rastafarians. It is the "someday" of our myths. The word "new" so freely used does not refer so much to something modern as to something imminent and long awaited. Its members through this premonition find their individual freedom, by choosing not a destination, but a direction. They do not choose the transformative journey because they know where it will take them, but because it is the only journey that makes sense.

Conclusion

What can the people of today learn from the Rastafarians? Especially an age of email faxes and cell phones where human contact is not essential to communication? We have become a society of narcissistic focused individuals, where the needs of the individual super cede that of the community. How do we go from me to we, from I to us? Or as Buber (1960) so poignantly states, " Hate sees only a part of a being. If a man sees a whole being and still hates, he is no longer in relation but in I-It; for to say Thou to a man means to affirm his being." (p. 59). The Rastafarians would agree with Buber and

perhaps take it a step further and say that it is essential we know ourselves before we can know others. And they would say that to thrive not just survive; we must work as a community and not as lone wolves. Because can anyone feel truly liberated if even one person in our global community is oppressed?

True liberation cannot be obtained without violence. And that violence is not always physical but it is rather the complete dying of the self, which is intrinsically a violent action. So freedom or true liberation cannot be achieved without the self-succumbing to a new person, a new life. And this is at the core of Rastafarian art and the movement. This presents two polarities life and death. Choosing life can only be attained by self-actualization. You must see yourself in time and history as a component of or link to the whole. The whole represents the community and the community represents you. They are a reflection of one another and are interdependent. Marx (1963) comments on social and communal existence when he states, " It is not only the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but on the contrary their social existence determines their consciousness" (p. 133).

However, many individuals do not acknowledge this interdependence. The community is an ecosystem that relies on the optimum function of all its components to thrive. If anyone of its members falls the entire system is affected. In the Rastafarian sense we are responsible for ourselves and for one another. This is vividly expressed in Rastafarian art where liberation is a central theme and the struggle is not just the "I" but to succeed it must be the "We". Fanon (1963) states, " In the same way the people make use of certain episodes in the life of the community in order to hold themselves ready and to keep alive their revolutionary zeal" (p. 69)

We come then to the question of why is it important to study and more importantly learn from the Rastafarian movement? Can this present the opportunity for recreation or rebirth? The Rastafarians, through their art, are able to see themselves as they truly are; they are comfortable with themselves, their own ethnicity, and their own cultural expressions. Once they have accepted themselves then they can truly join hands with others and create that community of true liberation/liberators.

The Rastafarian movement is constantly evolving, and through this transformation changes occur in four basic ways: 1) Change by exception, 2) Incremental change, 3) Pendulum change, and 4) Paradigm change.

The easiest and most limited of these is change by exception. This change allows the old belief system to remain intact but allows for a handful of anomalies, the way an old paradigm tolerates a certain number of odd phenomena that hang around its edges before the breakthrough to a larger, more satisfying paradigm. The member who engages in change by exception may dislike all members of a particular ethnicity, except one or two. For example, they may consider psychic phenomena nonsense yet still believe that his or her grandmother's dreams came true. These are dismissed as "exceptions that prove the rule" instead of the exceptions that disprove the rule.

Incremental change occurs little by little, and the individual member is not aware of having changed. For example, the individual potential forms of consciousness is identifiable with the movement, and is evident to others but not to the individual member.

There is pendulum change, the abandonment of one closed and certain system for another. The hawk becomes a dove, the bigot becomes a friend and lover of all, the oppressor becomes the oppressed and the religious zealot becomes an atheist. Pendulum

change fails to integrate what was right with the old and fails to discriminate the value of the new from its overstatements. Pendulum change rejects its own prior experiences going from one kind of half-knowing to another.

Change by exception, incremental change, and pendulum change stop short of transformation. Rastafarians around the world are having difficulty dealing with this barrage of conflicting information, and only those who can integrate it are able to continue the liberation struggle.

Unless the movement can standardize these ideas into a powerful cohesive format for understanding the integration of conflicting information, the movement will cease to exist. Therefore a paradigm change is needed.

Paradigm change refines and integrates. Paradigm change attempts to heal the delusion of either-or, of this-or that. In many ways, it is the most challenging kind of change because it relinquishes certainty. It allows for different interpretations from different perspectives at different times.

Change by exception says, "I am right, except for _____." Incremental change says, " I was almost right, but now I am right." Pendulum change says, " I was wrong before, but now I am right." Paradigm change says, " I was partially right before, and now I am a little more partially right." In paradigm change the movement and its members realize that their previous views were only part of the picture—and that what they know now is only part of what they will know later. Change to the movement is no longer threatening. It absorbs, enlarges, and enriches. The unknown is friendly, interesting territory. Each insight widens the road, making the next stage of development easier.

Change itself changes, just as in nature, evolution evolves from a simple to a complex process. Every new occurrence alters the nature of those to follow, like compound interest. Paradigm change is not a simple linear effect. It is a sudden shift of pattern, a spiral, and sometimes a cataclysm.

When we wake up to the flux and alteration of our own awareness we augment change. And like the Rastafarians, we recognize and promote that change to liberate. Synthesis builds on synthesis thereby supporting the liberation thought through the Rastafarian movement in its search for social identity.

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